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HAYDEN'S "SINCERITY" PRAISED BY INDONESIA

Canberra appeared to understand Jakarta's claim that East Timor had voluntarily joined Indonesia and relations between the Hawke Government and Indonesia had greatly improved, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Mochtar, said here.

His statements contrasted starkly with his warning in July that both countries might have to cool their relations if Australia interfered in the East Timor issue.

This time, he said that while relations had not been sour, "they have become even better, they are much easier, because Australia appears to be easier on East Timor, not so preoccupied". He praised Australian Foreign Minister Mr. Hayden's "sincere" handling of the East Timor issue recently.

He praised the alp's revised East Timor policy, which no longer rejects Indonesia's incorporation of the former portuguese territory in 1976. Instead it expresses concern over alleged human rights violations there and regrets the lack of an internationally supervised act of self-determination.

"Foreign Minister Bill Hayden's statements in Lisbon, especially, were very useful, very helpful. I have no doubt he was quite sincere. So it seems that Australia has realised that the Indonesian position is in accordance with the facts" he said.

In Lisbon in September, Mr. Hayden said he wished to avoid dogmatism when asked if he supported a solution guaranteeing self-determination for East Timor. Portugal, which claims to be the administering power in the territory, favors self-determination.

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Australia supported efforts by UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to resolve the diplomatic and military conflict over East Timor to the satisfaction of all parties, Mr. Hayden said. He was sceptical of claims Fretilin represented the majority of East Timorese, and said some Australian media reports on East Timor were "quite erroneously based".

Dr. Mochtar said he would visit Australia, possibly next April, at Mr. Hayden's invitation and explain Indonesia's view to any impartial audience willing to listen, "if I can find that kind of audience in Australia".

Dr. Mochtar has previously criticized "anti-Indonesian" attitudes on the border issue by Australian media and academics working in PNG.

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